

YOUR HEALTH & WELL BEING



CIGNA HealthCare
A Business of Caring.



Living with Diabetes: *The Importance of Nutrition and Exercise*

With diabetes, high blood-glucose levels rob the body of an important energy source and can lead to serious complications. If you have diabetes, it is important to take care of yourself every day – taking your medications as prescribed and following a dietary and exercise plan outlined by your doctor.

The proper diet is critical to diabetes treatment. It can help someone with diabetes:

- Achieve and maintain desirable weight. Many people with diabetes can control their blood-glucose by losing weight and keeping it off.

Did You Know?

Did you know that pre-diabetes occurs when your blood glucose (sugar) levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to indicate diabetes? If you have pre-diabetes, two simple steps can help delay or prevent diabetes. If you're overweight, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends that you lose 5 to 10 percent of your weight. Cutting fat and calories and walking for at least 30 minutes a day also may help you bring your blood glucose level back to normal.

- Maintain normal blood-glucose levels.
- Prevent heart and blood vessel diseases that tend to occur in people with diabetes.

A doctor will usually prescribe diet as part of diabetes treatment. The guidelines for diabetes diet planning include the following:

- The American Diabetes Association recommends that 50 to 60 percent of daily calories come from carbohydrates, 12 to 20 percent from protein, and no more than 30 percent from fat.
- Spacing meals throughout the day, instead of eating heavy meals once or twice a day, can help a person avoid extremely high or low blood-glucose levels.
- With few exceptions, the best way to lose weight is gradually: one or two pounds a week.
- Losing weight and reducing intake of saturated fats and cholesterol, in favor of unsaturated and monounsaturated fats, can also help lower blood cholesterol.

Exchange lists are useful in planning a diabetes diet. They place foods with similar nutrients and calories into groups. With the help of a nutritionist, the person plans the number of servings from each exchange list that he or she should eat throughout the day. Diets that use exchange lists offer more choices than preprinted diets. More information on exchange lists is available from nutritionists and from the American Diabetes Association.

Know Your ABCs

Diabetes doesn't have to keep you from a fulfilling, active life. Understanding your diabetes – how it affects your overall health – is vital if you want to manage your condition better and avoid serious medical complications. And learning to control the ABCs of diabetes will help you live a long and healthy life.

A is for A1c

The hemoglobin A1c (A-one-C) test measures your average blood glucose (sugar) over the last three months.

Recommended target: below 7.0

B is for Blood Pressure

High blood pressure makes your heart work too hard.

Recommended target: below 130/80

C is for Cholesterol

Bad (lousy) cholesterol, or LDL, builds up in and clogs your arteries.

Recommended LDL target: below 100

Discuss these questions with your doctor:

1. What are my ABC numbers?
2. What should my ABC target numbers be?
3. What actions should I take to reach my ABC target numbers?

If you have diabetes, you also have a greater risk for having a heart attack or stroke. But you can fight back. Be smart with

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your heart. Take action now to lower your risk for heart attack and stroke and other diabetes problems:

- Get physical activity every day.
- Eat less fat and salt.
- Eat more fiber - choose whole grains, fruits, vegetables and beans.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Stop smoking - ask your provider for help.
- Take medicines as prescribed.
- Ask your doctor about taking aspirin.
- Ask others to help you manage your diabetes.

Adapted from The National Diabetes Education Program, November 2001.

Exercise

Regular exercise combined with a good diet can help control diabetes. Exercise not only burns calories, which can help with weight reduction, it also can improve the body's response to insulin. As a result, following a regular exercise program can make oral diabetes medications and insulin more effective and can help control blood-glucose levels.

Exercise will help your health and well-being, but if you're taking oral drugs or insulin, remember that strenuous exercise can cause dangerously low blood glucose. Signs include hunger, nervousness, shakiness, weakness, sweating, headache and blurred vision. As a precaution, carry a food or drink high in sugar for medical emergencies, and wear

an identification bracelet or necklace to alert a stranger that you have diabetes and may need special medical help. Most important, any exercise program should be started slowly and with the advice of a doctor.

Source: WebMD Public Information from the National Institutes of Health.

Did You Know?

Information about diabetes, nutrition and exercise are just a phone call away? Listen to tapes on hundreds of health-related topics, just by calling the CIGNA 24-Hour Health Information LineSM at 1.800.CIGNA24, or the toll-free number on your ID card.

Control Your Diabetes, and it Won't Control You

Diabetes can make life a real challenge. Your diet, your energy level, your ability to recover from minor illnesses – so many things are affected. And the complications of diabetes – poor circulation and vision problems, for instance – are just as sobering as the condition itself.

CIGNA understands the complex circumstances of diabetes and has developed a program to help you monitor and manage your condition so you can reduce the risk of related complications.

As part of CIGNA Well Aware for Better HealthSM, you will receive personalized tools and support so you can work with your doctor to design a care plan that's focused on:

- Becoming vigilant about preventive steps;
- Making important dietary changes and exercising wisely;

- Reducing the risk of complications, such as severe infections and vision problems.

The Well Aware program also includes access to a team of registered nurses and other health care experts who are available by phone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

CIGNA developed the Well Aware program for diabetes using nationally recognized resources. It keeps up to date on the most current research practices to help make sure its program continues to be effective and simple enough to fit into the busy lives made all the more complicated by diabetes.

With the right plan, the right tools and the right team of professionals, CIGNA believes people with diabetes can spend less time being patients, and more time living their lives. To learn more about the Well Aware diabetes program, visit my CIGNA.com or call CIGNA HealthCare Member Services at the toll-free number on your ID card.



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